

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. A method for signaling a bearer connection coupled to a telecommunications network, wherein the
5 telecommunications network employs a first protocol and the bearer connection employs a second protocol, the method comprising the steps of:

mapping at least a portion of the first protocol to the
10 second protocol; and

inserting a first signal of the first protocol into a second signal of the second protocol according to the mapping, wherein the first signal of the first protocol
15 is employed in the control of the bearer connection.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first protocol is an Internet Protocol (IP), and the step of mapping maps at least a portion of the Internet Protocol
20 to the second protocol.
3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the second protocol is an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) protocol, and the step of mapping maps at least a portion of the
25 ATM protocol to the first protocol.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first protocol is an Internet Protocol (IP) and the second protocol is an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) protocol,
30 wherein the step of mapping maps at least a portion of the Internet Protocol to the ATM protocol.
5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of translating the first signal of the first
35 protocol into a signal suitable for insertion into the second signal of the second protocol according to the mapping.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein the first protocol is an Internet Protocol (IP), wherein the step of translating translates an Internet Protocol address into a signal that is insertable into a predetermined area of the second signal of the second protocol.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the second signal of the second protocol is an ATM address and the step of translating translates the Internet Protocol address into a signal suitable for insertion into an area within a network prefix of the ATM address.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the step of mapping redefines a portion of the network prefix field following an authority and format identifier.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first signal of the first protocol is Internet Protocol (IP) port information, wherein the step of translating translates the Internet Protocol port information into a signal that is insertable into a predetermined area of the second signal of the second protocol.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the second signal of the second protocol is a generic identifier transport (GIT) information element, and wherein the step of translating translates the first signal into a signal suitable for insertion into the GIT information element.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the step of mapping maps the first signal translated into a user data area of the GIT information element.

12. An apparatus for signaling a bearer connection coupled to a telecommunications network, wherein the telecommunications network employs a first protocol and

the bearer connection employs a second protocol, the apparatus comprising:

5 a translator that translates, according to a predetermined mapping, between a first signal of the first protocol and a second signal of the second protocol; and

10 a gateway that inserts the first signal translated by the translator into the second signal, wherein the first signal is employed in the control of the bearer connection.

15 13. The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the telecommunications network is an Internet Protocol (IP) network.

20 14. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the bearer connection employs an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) protocol.

25 15. The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the mapping maps at least a portion of an internet protocol (IP) to an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) protocol.

30 16. The apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising a map that maps at least a portion of the first protocol to the second protocol.

35 17. The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the map maps the portion of the first protocol to an area suitable for insertion into the second signal of the second protocol.

18. The apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising a switch

19. The apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising an ingress media gateway for receiving the first signal translated and inserted into the second signal for setting up an initiating call.

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20. The apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising an egress media gateway for receiving the first signal translated and inserted into the second signal for setting up a terminating call.